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Advocacy and Association Management Issues

Final Report

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Report to Chemonics International

AMIR/CIPE Business Association Observational Study Tour

A delegation of Jordanian business association executives and government representatives visited Washington, DC; Austin, Texas; and Atlanta, Georgia for two weeks in June 2000 to observe and learn public policy advocacy and business association operations (membership, communications, government affairs, grassroots networks, governance, and board and committee relations) at the national, state, and municipal levels, with emphasis on their role in economic development and trade issues. The delegation was part of the United States Agency for International Development's Access to Microfinance and Improved Implementation of Policy Reform (AMIR) program that is designed to respond to the economic challenges facing Jordan through private sector growth. The Business Association Initiative component focuses on organizational development, policy analysis and advocacy, membership development, improvement of service offerings, and public relations in order to improve the operating performance and financial viability of a variety of private business associations in Jordan.

The group spent four days in Washington, DC, one day in Baltimore, Maryland, two days in Austin, Texas, and two days in Atlanta, Georgia. They visited a spectrum of associations, chambers, government offices, policy institutes, legislative representatives, trade specialists, and professionals in communications and lobbying. The complete itinerary is attached. Meetings were organized by CIPE, with assistance in Texas from one of its senior consultants. The delegation was accompanied by AMIR and CIPE representatives for all functions, and was accompanied by a Chemonics home office representative for selected DC meetings and throughout the Austin and Atlanta visits. This enabled the team to respond quickly to follow-up questions or needs expressed by the group.

Delegation

Eleven participants completed the program; an additional participant, Mr. Samih Darwazeh of the Jordan Trade Association, joined the group for one day in Washington. Each participant was representing a single association, though several participants serve on more than one board and were able to consider how the concepts presented could be applied in multiple contexts. The eleven participants were

Mr. Hassan H. Khalil, Member of Board of Directors, Amman World Trade Center
Ms. Wijdan Al-Saket, Chairperson, Business and Professional Women Amman
Mrs. Subhiya Ma'ani, Vice Chairperson, Business and Professional Women Jordan
Mr. Khalid Kilani, Vice Chairman, Information Technology Association
Ms. Hala Ayoubi, Member of Board or Directors, Young Entrepreneurs Association
Dr. Ahmad Hindawi, Director, Industrial Development Directorate, Ministry of Industry & Trade
Mr. Salem Khaza'leh, Companies Directorate, Companies Controller, Ministry of Industry & Trade
Mr. Fawaz Shalan, President, Jordanian American Business Association (AmCham)
Mr. Yanal Bustami, First Vice Chairman, Amman Chamber of Commerce
Dr. Zaki Ayoubi, Business Association Component Leader, AMIR Project
Ms. Sameera Qadoura, Training Manager, AMIR Project

Meeting Summaries

The group's itinerary began with orientation at Chemonics' home office, where introductions were made, goals reviewed and administrative details settled. Notes from subsequent meetings were taken by Jean Rogers of CIPE, and summaries were distributed later to participants to assist their own recall and to help any participants who may have had difficulty following the sometimes fast-paced discussions. *The summaries here are from those notes and are not officially vetted by the presenters themselves for public quotation; any errors are the author's.* In addition to the formal meetings, several informal discussions were held with CIPE, Texas Society of Association Executive Board Members, a US government employee reviewing regulatory impact on small business, and a researcher studying the development of Jordanian women in business for the AMIR program.

After the welcome, orientation and lunch with Chemonics and CIPE, the delegation's first meeting was with Deborah Bodlander, chief staffer for Congressman Ben Gilman on the **House International Relations Committee**. Ms. Bodlander gave a brief overview of Congressman Gilman's district and work on the Committee, particularly as relates to Middle East issues, and highlighted the scope of other key Committees, such as Ways and Means. She gave examples of how the Congressman's work on a day-to-day basis relates directly back to his home constituency, and the people and businesses in it, noting that Congressional staffers pore over local newspapers from the home district for "people-oriented" stories. Understanding this is important to understanding legislators' interests in particular issues. She spoke of how Congressman Gilman works with institutions such as the Department of Commerce and Congressional Research Service to gather data on a pending issue. She encouraged the group to work together, organize and become vocal on issues of importance to them. Concerning the proposed Jordanian Free Trade Agreement, she expressed optimism, although there are concerns regarding the few number of legislative days left before elections. She pointed to the Egyptian Chamber's "doorknock" as an example of effectively working an issue such as the Free Trade Agreement.

At the Library of Congress' **Congressional Research Service (CRS)** the group met with Susan Epstein, Al Prados, and Joshua Rueben. CRS began 90 years ago to meet the legislature's need for unbiased information, and now has a $67 million annual budget and a staff of 700. Objectivity is it's main goal in providing analysis – gathering and providing data on both sides of an issue without commentary or opinion. CRS is divided into 6 main divisions: American Law; Domestic Social Policy; Foreign Affairs, Defense & Trade; Government Finance; Information Research; and Resources, Science & Industry. CRS may get 600,000 requests each year from Congress, for whom it works exclusively. It may share information with others sometimes, but is not obligated to. Some information provided to Congress is disseminated to all legislators in the form of briefing papers, audio tapes, and the like. Much of the information is based on a specific request of a Member; those requests cannot be shared with other Members without permission. CRS may not assist Members with speeches or prepare data on only one side of an issue. Two of the presenters were Middle East specialists, so the group was briefed generally on the process and kinds of issues expected to arise during any discussion related to Free Trade Agreements, Investment Guarantees, or other economic development issues requiring U.S. government funding and the potential economic impact of a comprehensive peace settlement.

Toni Crouch of the **American Society of Association Executives (ASAE)** gave the group an overview of the breadth and status of associations in the U.S. Of the 144,000 associations in the U.S., 120,000 are state, local and regional organizations, while 23,000 are national, and only 1,300 are international. Three main types of associations are recognized: *trade associations* whose members are businesses which may be competitors with one another, *professional associations* whose members are individuals with commonality, such as automotive engineers or stamp collectors, and *philanthropic* or *charitable* associations. In the U.S. 70% of all adults belong to an association; 25% belong to 4 or more. Associations as an industry or employer are larger than all U.S. federal and state governments combined, and economically are a $56 billion/year meetings industry, $127 billion/year insurance industry, a $5.6 billion/year printing and publications industry, and a $1.1. billion/year technology industry. 90% of associations have an education component, 65% research and disseminate information, and 35% provide ethical or standards codes. The association sector in the U.S. is so large that it is its own profession, represented by associations like ASAE, which was founded 80 years ago with 67 members and now has 25,000 members, 145 staffers, and an annual budget of $21 million. ASAE has specialized interest sections, global fora, a non-profit research subsidiary, and a for-profit subsidiary providing phone, insurance and retirement saving services. The group learned that the U.S. has no "law on associations" as seen in other countries, but that the tax code and tax status of an organization is key in regulating associations. Some time was spent on this discussion to clarify the role of the government in establishing and/or controlling associations --these are <u>not</u> key functions in the U.S. model. Representing interests is the primary *benefit* of association membership -- it provides greater voice for the members, offers collective action options, helps to better inform decision makers, is an important intermediary in the democratic process, and is a constitutionally protected right ingrained in the American culture. 33% of associations have full-time government relations staff, 66% monitor legislation, 69% have grassroots advocacy programs, 60% work with Political Action Committees (PACs) or political campaigns, and 50% have direct lobbying programs. Regarding association management, the group heard that *governance* is the responsibility of the Board – setting policy and overall strategies and determining goals. It is the responsibility of the staff to determine *how* the goals will be met through activity plans and daily implementation. After the briefing, informal discussion revealed some discrepancy in how the term *staff* is used in the different cultures – such that in Jordan, staff would be more high-ranking, as in military terminology, whereas in U.S. non-military terminology, staff means anyone holding a paid position in the organization, and is generally lower-ranking than the Board, though the top paid staff, usually the president of the organization, may simultaneously be on the Board.

At the **Small Business Administration (SBA)**, an independent governmental agency established to protect the interests of small business in the U.S., the group received a brief history of the SBA's establishment and its function in reviewing regulatory burdens on small business. They were introduced to the concepts of "allocative efficiency" and "economic feasibility" in writing regulations and the idea behind the Paperwork Reduction Act, the Administrative Procedures Act, the Small Business Regulatory Fairness Enforcement Act (SEBREFA) and the Regulatory Review Board – all of which contribute to ensuring that necessary regulations are implemented with as little burden to small businesses as possible. (As these concepts needed further clarification in the overall context of administrative rule-making procedures in the U.S., CIPE arranged for the group to have the opportunity to follow up and ask questions over an informal lunch the next day with a government agency employee involved in implementing SEBREFA while writing environmental regulations. Documentation was also provided regarding the Act itself and guidelines for agency implementation of it.) SBA also highlighted its role in financial services, small business loans, venture capital match-making, information services and advocacy on behalf of small business. There was much discussion on the last point, with the group interested in learning how a government agency can also be a business advocate and how the agency interacts with associations – topics on which presenters throughout the week differed in opinion, as the group later learned.

At the **Heritage Foundation** the group met with Kim Holmes, Gerald O'Driscoll, Brett Schaefer, and Jim Phillips to discuss advocacy further. Tax deductibility was raised again as a key issue to attracting indigenous funding for organizations like Heritage, which described its focus as "near-term and therefore less academic, more practical, and more relevant to policy makers." Heritage is a philosophically based organization, conservative in its opinions but not directly politically affiliated as similar thinks tanks in countries such as Germany would be. It has a diverse funding base which gives it a great deal of stability and independence from donor influence. Heritage prepares a number of products on an issue – from quick Executive Memos of 2 pages in length, to more detailed 8-10 page Issue Backgrounders, to its primary research published as the annual Economic Freedom Index book. For each of these products, Heritage looks at the interest groups – Congress, media, local groups, etc. – as *markets* and tailors/targets appropriate information and products as needed for each of those markets. The group heard again what it had been told in its first meeting with Ms. Bodlander: that tying impact analysis to the interests within a Congressman's home district is important. Heritage discussed the importance of its strategic planning process in identifying its on-going institutional priorities and its annual top issues. Using the recent debate on China PNTR (Permanent Normal Trade Relations) as a case study, Heritage pointed out that, as an ideologically conservative organization, its interests may diverge from that of the business community if business is seeking protection from freer markets. Beginning with a free market-orientation, Heritage's internal debate focused on the "permanent" part of PNTR; ultimately its Board voted to support PNTR, though the organization also raised areas of concern such as nuclear proliferation and the relationship with Taiwan. Once the decision was made, the staff was "unleashed" in an all-out effort to email economic impact statistics to key Congressmen, speak on the Hill, disseminate analysis papers, give press interviews, and address public fora throughout the country. The group learned that Heritage emphasizes staff training so that they are professionally prepared for all of these situations through writing courses, public speaking classes, and media/TV appearance seminars. Discussing trade more generally, and the likelihood of a US-Jordan FTA, the group found out that trade in US political discourse is typically a presidential issue, on which a President must usually "spend some political clout" to advance -- and on which few in Congress are likely to initiate debate without Presidential impetus. Thus, the outcome of the U.S. presidential elections – coupled with the progress of the peace agreement – could influence the prioritization of a US-Jordan FTA, though Jordan is viewed favorably in almost all parts of the U.S. Throughout its meetings, the group received several different outlooks for the prospects of the JFTA – all positive, but differing on the predicted timing given the nearing end of the legislative session and the pending presidential elections.

At the **U.S. Chamber of Commerce**, Wally Workman and Lonnie Taylor spoke to the group about business advocacy specifically, Stephen Thurman talked about economic development, and CIPE Board member Phyllis Bonanno discussed advocacy in the context of FTAs between countries. Though advocacy can be (and is) often thought of as an adversarial process, it does not need to be – who better to say whether a policy will promote economic growth than the people who are involved in business on a daily basis? In this context, the advocacy process is more about *mutual benefit*: legislators benefit by receiving expert opinion upon which to base their decisions and learn more about the breadth of support among their various constituencies, while businesses and other interested parties ensure that their opinions and concerns are taken into consideration in the decision-making. The group learned of the importance of small business in particular -- in the economy, as part of the Chamber's membership and as part of the advocacy process. 93% of all new jobs are created by the private sector, almost all by small companies (and this does not mean lower wage). Small businesses tend to be very active in their community, very active voters, the most loyal association or chamber members, and the most intensely opinionated on policy issues related to them. Mr. Workman spoke generally about some of the ways the Chamber works with members to advocate issues by arranging direct meetings with government agencies, through media, and by organizing business members in Congressional home districts so that Congressmen hear from businesses in their region about the impact of policies on businesses at home. Comparing the trade policy debates on China PNTR and NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), Mr. Workman pointed out to the group that the key argument to make on issues like this may not always be an intellectual argument, but may touch "gut reactions" or emotional issues ancillary to or tied to trade issues, and that each must be handled differently. Most important is that the argument offered on behalf of a position be simple, straight-forward, and easily understood by "the man in the street." Focus on common goals: the last thing any government wants is to preside over an economic downturn, therefore business growth is a mutual interest. Organize, decide what you want as a group, get involved, be vigilant, and stick with any agreements made, he advised. Lonnie Taylor, the Chamber's chief lobbyist, described in greater detail the Chamber's grassroots programs which keep members informed about issues affecting them and keep them primed to become involved during critical decision points. He gave an overview of the reach of the Chamber community through regional offices and emphasized that the Chamber has someone in the field everyday meeting with members, speaking to local groups, giving interviews, etc. And he underscored the doggedness of the Chamber in reaching decision makers anywhere it can. He stressed the importance of getting members involved early in the process -- not asking them to catch up to what's going on and step in at a critical time on sudden notice, when they feel they have less of a stake in the process and are not well prepared to represent a position. Taylor also explained that, though there is no law requiring the government to consult with the business community, the reality is more important, and the reality is that businesspeople are active voters who determine through elections whether Congress has done its job well.

Phyllis Bonanno, a CIPE Board member, then met briefly with the group at the Chamber to address questions raised earlier in the week regarding trade agreement negotiations. Ms.

Bonanno advised the group to work together with their members and the broader business community as well as the responsible government officials to determine Jordan's top five priority areas for growth potential, then to compare how those related to the accession agreement and cross matrix the priorities with current status of TRIPS, tariffs and non-tariff barriers to decide which things they should ask for *that the US could give.* She noted as an example that, if textiles, pharmaceuticals, or chemicals were priority areas, it would be more difficult to negotiate because of the highly protected and regimented nature of those sectors. On the other hand, the IT sector could be an opportunity because it does not have many rules, yet Jordan must also consider that it can only mobilize about 800,000 skilled workers and so must choose its targets for growth with care and address labor resource issues as well. Ms. Bonanno pointed out that negotiations can be carried out without advocacy, but that it is better if they go hand-in-hand so that priorities set by government reflect business and labor priorities and realities. Selecting sectors for targeted growth which do not reflect those realities can lead to "rust factory syndrome".

Mike McCurry, president of Public Strategies Group and former White House spokesperson, discussed communication with the group, emphasizing the "5 C's" which apply when dealing with legislators, press, public, or other constituencies. Organizations, he said, must have Credibility, be Candid, provide Clarity, show Compassion, and demonstrate Commitment in order to be effective. Though these seem simple and obvious, they are often put to the test, especially during a crisis when organizations may prefer to obfuscate, give glib answers, or not acknowledge legitimate opposition positions. Organizations which are truly committed, however, keep their strategic long-term interests in mind and are willing and able to live up to the five C's, thus establishing a position and relationships which are beneficial and stable in moving toward their goals.

The group then met with former **Senator Robert Kasten,** who now heads his own consulting firm. Senator Kasten gave the group his background as a small business owner who moved into legislature with an understanding of how government regulations affect business on a daily basis. He gave an overview of the US political process, particularly vis-à-vis upcoming elections and the impact on policy discussions. He also explained the connections underlying the widely held position in US foreign policy decision-making that peace, democracy, and free enterprise go hand-in-hand. He and his colleague, Fred Ruth, discussed how the business community and individual businesses become part of the decision-making process, how this works on a practical basis, and some of the checks that are in place in the US system which allow it to function with greater balance. He outlined the long history of voluntary associations or community groups in the US banding together for action without formal sanctioning of government. Having long had an interest in Middle East business and defense issues, Senator Kasten also discussed some of the growth opportunities that he sees for the region, particularly for building middle class and small business group. He emphasized the need for building "brainpower" not infrastructure – focusing on management, leadership, and entrepreneurial skills which move away from a top-down business model at the same time moving away from a top-down governance model by increasing capabilities and opportunities at lower levels. Mr. Ruth then answered questions the group had about the internal workings at the staff level of a legislator's office . The group was curious to know how staff sort and prioritize the information received to determine what is called to the legislator's attention. He explained the process of staff and committee reviews, coupled with comparative analysis by the Congressional Research Service which help identify the positions, whether there is a compromise, if there is a political dimension to the decision, and what the impact in the home district will be. Factual analysis hold the most sway, he said, although there are times when a single legislator may use a non-decisive vote to send a signal or make a statement. He recommended that the way for material to "make it to the top of the pile" is for the organizations to band together to form a position and to provide solid factual information to defend that position.

Following up on earlier meetings in Jordan with the Jordanian-American Business Association, **Molly Williamson of the US Department of Commerce** hosted a business roundtable for the group, providing an opportunity to meet directly with American companies to update them on reforms in Jordan and opportunities for trade and investment. General discussion focused on privatization, WTO, and intellectual property protection changes, investment promotion initiatives and concessions, and improvements in legal structures and transparency. The American companies that had investments in Jordan were able to give feedback on their experience, which was largely positive, and companies considering Jordan were able to ask questions and find out about opportunities to follow-up and exchange detailed information with the delegation and their memberships.

The group spent a day in Baltimore before leaving the Washington area. There they met with the **Maryland Economic Development Corporation**, a public-private partnership initiative to create jobs in Maryland, whether through exporting, inward investment, joint ventures or other business arrangements. The group learned how the organization was established with public and private support and how bureaucracy is contained so that the organization is run on a client-oriented basis. One-third of the funding may come from the state, but investors pool to provide the rest and sit on a joint board to devise policies and programs together which operate in a manner similar to a private consultancy. They explored some of the programs which the organization spearheads and saw how various member-based and non-member-based business organization cooperate to improve the business climate and create new opportunities to build the community.

At the **Baltimore World Trade Center**, a counterpart organization for one of the delegates, the group saw how services that are member-driven are self-sustaining and how the services to members can also be used to generate revenue from non-members or to attract new members to the organization.

In Austin, Texas, the group saw another angle on business involvement in policy-making. They began with an overview of the State of Texas' governance presented by Senior CIPE consultant **Larry Milner** and Texas Department of Human Services Public Information Officer **Chris Traylor**. Texas differs at the executive level (governor) from other US states because there is no cabinet reporting to the governor. Instead there are "citizen boards" -- one-third of the members on the boards are appointed every two years to serve 6-year terms (by a governor whose term is 4 years). The system has built in debate in order to maintain stability in the governing rules and laws; only those proposals which make it through the debate process are enacted. There are several opportunities for associations to have input in this process, which begins with a public meeting or hearing, draft proposals are published for public comment (usually over a 60-day period), and comments must be addressed before the proposal can be voted within the legislature for enactment.

At the **Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce** the group learned about the growth path that Austin has taken over the last few decades – from the 1960s when it was a sleepy town of 300,000 people employed mostly by government and universities, to the early 1980s when it began a campaign to encourage CEOs to visit Austin, promoting the city's benefits for business in terms of comparative cost of living, education, and environment. This concerted and coordinated effort, in which public-private partnerships played a key role, led to both diversification and growth in the local economy. The campaign originally focused on bringing in any business it could, but gradually became more focused. Those working on it also realized that state incentives were of limited value; since every state has an incentive package, the ultimate decision for the business is influenced by other factors. Austin understood its limitations, such as not having a port or a large airport, and made the most of the natural advantages it had and its untapped potential. These days, Austin's main issue is transportation – facing the challenge of keeping all of the people, products and services flowing while preserving the quality of life which attracted them in the first place. The changing "new economy" poses policy challenges for the Chamber and the State. Texas has no state income tax, but does have a "franchise tax" on capital-intensive industries, along with high property and sales taxes. With increasing emphasis on the internet economy – with little "brick and mortar" presence and "networld" sales presence -- how will the economy be affected? The Chamber's has 2,400 mostly corporate members which represent hundreds of thousands of employees; its mission is to advance and protect the quality of life in Austin, focusing on the economy, environment and education. With a diverse membership, the chamber must maintain a process for deciding quickly and managing non-unanimity on issues. Questions which must be answered for the chamber to become involved include What are the stakes? How important is it in terms of the people affected and the economic impact? Who else is involved in the issue? Can the Chamber support other efforts or it necessary to lead? Could small resources contribute to an amenable outcome? What is the probability of success? Through this process, the chamber ranks issues and allocates resources, focusing on fewer than 10 issues at a time. Most of its time is spent on local and regional issues, approximately 20-30% on state-level issues, and around 10% on federal issues. The Chamber recognizes, however, that only being active on a few issues important to it does not create "political capital" and status as an influential organization, so it cooperates with other organizations and strives to create ideas, energy and communication within the community. Ultimately, the chamber operates as a microcosm of democracy, with member input setting the direction for the organization.

At the **Texas Society of Association Executives (TSAE)**, Robert Floyd continued that theme, noting the changing role of associations. This fluctuates with the economy, he said, because when business confidence is high, members feel less need for their associations than when business is facing potential threats which the associations can help address. TSAE is revamping the time commitments needed from its members by reducing committees and events and focusing more on internet services. Associations used to run on "our time," he said, but now have to focus on running the association at the convenience of members time. In today's information glut, the new role for associations is to craft *knowledge* from *information* and to provide this in a convenient, flexible, and time-sensitive way for their members. There is also greater emphasis on professionalism and certification with the association community as it continues to hone its own status as a separate profession with unique skill sets.

The group was treated to an inside looked at a highly organized lobbying and communications program at the **Texas Hospital Association**. THA's 400 members represent 87% of the hospitals and health systems in the state and are a mix of private, public, religious, metro, rural, and large investor organizations governed by thousands of regulations. This means that advocacy is needed at the state, federal and agency level, that building relationship between the industry and legislators and their staffs is important, and that THA has a major role as a link between its members and those responsible for regulating them. To deliver the services needed and expected by its members, THA has a highly professional staff which is actively involved in developing products and services; it is quick to point to its governance documents, though, to emphasize that it is the members and volunteer Board leadership which set overall policy and direction for the organization. To achieve its goals, THA regularly reaches out to other organizations as well, identifying commonalities on which to build coalitions which strengthen their chances for success on an issue. The "Coalition for a Healthy Texas", for example, is a major initiative with participation from the American Heart Associations, the March of Dimes, physicians groups, insurers, nurses organizations, and others which have a common interest in the policies to be addressed by the coalition. THA provide the group with a number of examples of the materials it uses in advancing a cause, from members newsletters, issue bulletins for legislators, and action alerts for members to contact legislators. These are excellent and important tools which demonstrate the effective way to approach legislators and to involve members in the approach to legislators.

Chris Shields, erstwhile vice president of the Texas Chamber of Commerce and now an independent professional lobbyist, highlighted the basic rules of working with legislators for the group, echoing a number of themes touched on in Washington by Mike McCurry and tying them to concrete and specific recommendations for association actions. First, he said, allocate enough resources to your government relations effort. Too often, there is a disconnect between what is important to members and where the association allocates its resources. Second, communicate with members – associations may influence policy, but too frequently members don't know or are given superficial information on the issue. Third, be specific about what you want from the members and from the legislators. Associations which take only the big picture approach can find their efforts blunted by a couple of vocal members; at the same time, the association must be prepared to take controversial positions even if the members are not unanimous in their support (they rarely will be). Fourth, it is critical how you frame the issue; be sure to frame it in such a way to align goals with the public interest. Fifth, recognize that personal relationships are no longer enough to achieve action; associations must be able to provide substantive technical understanding and link information to knowledge. Sixth, ethics and credibility are valuable assets. Seventh, embrace open government; full disclosure and following rules are important because the association should not be doing anything that it would be ashamed of its members or the public knowing about, therefore comply with all rules regarding finance and lobby reports. In closing, Chris noted that 10 years ago the main issue for economic development in Texas was taxation; today it is job training because Texas is importing brainpower to fill business needs while, with proper schooling and training, those jobs could be filled by lower income Texans, meeting job needs and alleviating poverty at the same time.

Paul Davis, a lobbyist who works mainly with specific companies, agreed with Chris' points and emphasized that lobbyists today are an information source for legislators and for clients, giving legislators technical information regarding the industry and the company and giving the client information about processes and political realities. He said that associations have an advantage over individuals in advocating policies because they represent a broad range of people who have legislative relationships and can "quick start" an initiative. This is, in fact, a public responsibility for associations; it is not a matter of whether you want to participate in the process, you MUST participate in the process. He added to Chris' list of tips by saying that associations should always celebrate and communicate their victories, build the message they wish to take to legislators within their own organizations first, and then don't try to oversell the organization or its knowledge but rely on the members' knowledge and networks to tap the expertise needed. Finally, be patient -- a good lobbyist not only knows the issue, he knows the right person in the process to approach, has a sense of timing for getting the message out at the moment for most impact, and recognizes that policy-making is indeed a *process*.

The group held informal questions and answer networking lunches with Board members of TSAE and with Art Roberts of the Texas Association of Business & Chambers of Commerce, enjoyed a tour of the State Capitol, talked with the librarian of the legislative reference library, and were received by Senator Jeff Wentworth's Chief of Staff for informal Q&A on the legislator's perspective on business input in the policy-making process.

In Atlanta, Georgia, the delegation met first with the vice president for government affairs at the **Georgia State Chamber of Commerce**, Stephen Loftin. The Chamber has 3,200 members, of which 140 professional lobbyists participate in its Government Affairs Council. The State of Georgia has more than 1200 lobbyist, registered as required by law if it is their profession. The State legislature has 180 members in the lower house and 56 senators, who are part time representatives working 3 months a year. The general message of the Chamber is getting the public and the government to recognize that business success leads to economic and community success; therefore it is in everyone's interest to support business growth. The first step to doing that concretely is to listen to the business themselves. To do this, the chamber hold listening meetings all around the state on an on-going basis. Based on the knowledge gained about business concerns, the Chamber develops an agenda which is sent to all state representatives. Meetings are held with key representatives in which the Chamber also identifies the representatives priorities – finding common ground and creating a two-way communication channel. The State chamber works closely with the local chambers, too, not because they have to but because they will not be as strong or successful as they could be if they don't. Focusing on members' needs and on communications is the key to success, he said. With a diverse member base, one of the ways in which the Chamber balances potentially conflicting big/small business interests is by having a large Board of Directors which reflects the diversity of the membership. After the state-wide listening sessions, an annual survey is sent to all members (with a typical response rate of 600 out of 3200); the issues identified are then taken to the professional lobbyists on the Government Affairs committee to assess the feasibility of action on them and lastly, the priorities are drafted and taken to the Board for a vote. The resulting agenda is widely communicated among members, potential members, policy makers, media, and the public.

At the **Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce** greater emphasis is placed on "relationship mothering." Members typically join for the opportunities to network and partner, and the chamber makes it a priority to help "get members to the right people". Events are important, with more than 138 events per year available to members at the basic level ($400/year plus $8 per employee). Members interested in higher level access to key decision makers in government or other companies may join at the Board of Advisors rate of $5,000/year. This structure helps meet the differing needs of the large and small members. Metro Atlanta's membership is 3 times that of the Georgia State Chamber and is also extremely diverse. Small businesses may need more immediate assistance in opening doors to new business opportunities, participating in education events, or receiving discounts on services such as web site presence, health insurance , cell phone service, training, and consulting. Larger firms may be more interested in high-level access and coalition-building possibilities for promoting Atlanta as a business destination, while the largest firms – of which CNN, Coca-Cola, Home Depot, UPS, Lockheed, Ritz Carlton, and Delta Airlines are just a few in Atlanta – may need less direct service for themselves but be more interested in community support projects which build goodwill and enhance their corporate reputation. Metro Atlanta designs programs which meet each of these needs. It also works with its members and other organizations on large-scale campaigns to improve the business climate and attract new businesses to the region. AltantaSmartCity.com is one example – a web-based project which highlights workforce issues in high-tech sectors such as telecommunications, computer software and services, and bio-med and bio-tech industries. "Smart growth" is a major focus for the downtown area – addressing housing, transportation, and amenity needs to support the influx of companies. The chamber has divisions which deal with governmental affairs, arts, sports, transport, and the environment; each of these is tied to the overall organizational goal of making Atlanta a business destination.

At the **Georgia Department of Industry Trade and Tourism** (GDITT) the group met Georgia's counterpart to the Maryland Economic Development Council and learned that public-private partnerships are a key focus in many states. This cooperative approach has made Georgia 2nd only to Florida in the Southeast region for foreign direct investment, attracting a diverse base of investment with 1,636 internationally owned facilities in the state from top partners in Canada, Japan, Korea, Britain, Holland, Germany, and Australia. Georgia is also the 14th largest exporter in the US. Like its Maryland counterpart, the GDITT has many programs designed to increase business growth and trade flow. It has outreach programs for investment promotion, film industry, tourism, trade promotion, job re-training for rural areas. It does this in partnership with many business associations and groups in the state. Companies interested in the state would most likely approach GDITT first, which would assess the company's criteria, put together a package of recommended locations within the state based on those criteria, and work with the Chambers in those areas to make the best pitch to attract the business. In addition to meeting with any company approaching them about investing in the state, the GDITT also selects businesses which it wishes to actively pursue and seeks out opportunities to attract businesses in its target sectors. As one example of successful business, government and academic collaboration, the group learned more about the state's education programs, in which legislation authorizing a state lottery was passed with the stipulation that the funds would go to improving education. The budget allocation for education remained the same, and the lottery funds were additional monies made available to improve the educational system.

Now Georgia guarantees that all high school students maintaining a B average get full scholarship to state universities or $3,000 scholarship to private universities in Georgia. Although initial opposition said that this would decrease the quality of the schooling, the state now says that more of the "best and brightest" students are staying in state, and teachers salaries have been raised substantially, which has improved the quality of the universities and made admissions more competitive rather than less so. Georgia is now looking at implementing a "pay for performance" plan for teachers and a "pre K" program for very young children as it continues to address education issues closely tied to workforce issues important to the business community.

Following up on the Washington meeting with the Small Business Administration, the group was interested to visit an **Small Business Center** field office to see the practicalities of assisting smaller businesses. Bernie Meineke, director of the center at Georgia State University explained the SBC network, how the field offices are staffed and funded, and the services they provide. There was a great deal of Q&A regarding training in particular and how the SBC helps small firms prepare business plans to present to potential funders or loan officers.

After learning about some of the broader policy programs to improve the business climate and the concrete business-assistance provided to attract businesses and support small ones, the group had the opportunity to see one of Atlanta's best-known companies in action by touring the CNN studios.

Handouts & Materials

Participants were given a variety of materials to back up the presentations and discussions. Many of these were handed out as part of the meetings; others were gathered in response to queries from participants in order to deepen their understanding of a particular issue of interest. Handouts included:

from the US-Arab Chamber of Commerce:
- *Tradeline*, weekly fax newsletter
- *U.S.-Arab Trade Monitor* statistics for May 2000
- Membership brochure

from the Maryland Department of Business & Economic Development:
- *Maryland Business Incentives: the right tools for business growth* (brochure)
- *Services for Maryland Exporters* (program flyer)
- *Export MD* (program flyer)
- *Pathfinder* (program flyer)
- *Maryland Trade Finance Group Overview of Services*
- *Come to Work, Stay to Play* (Maryland business investment promotional brochure)

Kasten & Company:
- Overview of corporate services in investment and export promotion
- Legislative biography of Senator Kasten

World Trade Center Institute
- Services and membership brochure

Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE)
- *Economic Reform Today* magazine Arabic reader edition

Economic Reform Today CIPE 15 year review
Text of the newly signed electronic signature bill
EPA agency guidance for rule writers on the Regulatory Flexibility Act and Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act
Summary of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Act w/ web site of full text

US Chamber of Commerce
Economic Outlook (graphics, linking trade and economic growth)

Heritage Foundation
Executive Memorandum on US-Jordan relations after death of King Hussein
Jordan overview from the 2000 *Economic Freedom Index*
Summary graph of economic freedom in African and the Middle East
Summary graph showing link between economic freedom score and per capita GDP

American Society of Association Executives
Copy of slide presentation on associations in the US

Georgia Chamber of Commerce
Membership benefits brochure
Sample Weekly Legislative update bulletin
Sample Legislative Voting Record tracking business votes by district
Sample newsletter
Sample "listening session" outreach program to members to develop legislative agenda

Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce
International Atlanta directory
Atlanta SmartCity.com brochures promoting business relocation to Atlanta
Forward Atlanta: Management Services & Technical Assistance, Small Business Resource Handbook

Texas Hospital Association (THA)
Leadership guide
Sample letter to legislator
Sample legislative proposal from coalition of associations
Sample action alert for members to contact legislators on pending issue
Health Care Advocate weekly legislative update via fax
Capitol Update special report scorecard reviewing the closing legislative session
Hospital Notes special edition on primary election endorsements by THA
THA News regular monthly newsletter for members
Index of materials available by fax on demand
Calendar of educational seminars

Texas Association of Business and Chambers of Commerce

Cultural Notes

Outside of the meetings, participants had the opportunity to learn a bit about American history and culture -- touring each city, several of the major national monuments in DC, tall ships in Baltimore, the Texas State House, the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library, the Carter Center and Presidential Library, and the CNN studios.

Study Tour Evaluation by Participants

1. Participants' stated expectations in attending this Study Tour included:

To get introduced to the inter-relation between business associations and public sector
Inter-relation among chambers of commerce and other business associations
To learn more about the roles of business associations in economic development, especially in the public policy advocacy area
To be exposed to the U.S. association activities related to advocacy & communications
To learn advocacy
To learn about advocacy and cooperation between the public and private sectors as well as learn about industrial development programs in the US
To acquaint myself with advocacy procedures between business organization & government agencies towards better business promotion
I expected this study tour to give me a full imagination of how the association in USA work and how they are managed
To learn about associations advocacy work
To learn of programs for association management
Networking & contacts for future cooperation
Understanding US system of advocacy
To learn about advocacy and relationship among associations and governmental agencies
To observe, learn and exchange experiences on advocacy and public-private partnerships
To encourage relations and friendliness among participants
To widen the horizons of participants and foster people/business-to-people/business relations between Jordan and the US

2. Participants said that the Study Tour fulfilled their expectations in the following ways:

It was very informative in the direction of advocacy practices and sector whereby business associations supported their role. It was enlightening in networking.
Have first-hand information, much of which I will apply
It assisted me in many ways to understand how NGOs in the US operate and how associations advocate their views in the legislature
More than expected, as we have covered the advocacy subject at all levels – federal state & city. I have been exposed to a great deal about US economic strength.
I think it gives me what I expected during the lectures or brochures or by studying the way of work or administration
Re: advocacy. Excellent. Much more than I expected
Re: programs for association management. Adequate. Learned new things, except the field is too complex to cover in time allotted.
Re: networking. Excellent. Great contacts and prospects for cooperation.
Meeting with different types of organizations and different groups of people who are professional in this area, learning from them firsthand about this was of great degree up to expectations.
To high extent it was met by meeting with wide spectrum of associations in different sectors and at different levels.
I learned a lot about advocacy, the way US government operates, importance of democracy, the cooperation and complementarity with business associations
Yes
Excellent

WASHINGTON, DC & BALTIMORE

3. Participants rated each session in terms of clarity of presentation, quality of materials received, and usefulness. Rating is from 1 (low) to 5 (high)..

		Avg.
a)	Chemonics International Orientation	4.5
b)	US Congress Professional Staff (Debbie Bodlander, Foreign Relations committee)	4
c)	Congressional Research Service (S.Epstein, J.Reuben, A.Prados)	4.18
d)	Small Business Administration	2.91
e)	American Society of Association Executives	3.91
	U.S. Chamber of Commerce	
	W. Workman, VP International	4.33
	L. Taylor, Chief Lobbyist	4.3
	S. Thurman, Deputy Chief Economist	4.4
	P.Bonanno, former USTR professional	4.2
f)	National US Arab Chamber of Commerce (D. Holmes, G. Faidi, &	4
g)	Heritage Foundation (K.Holmes, G. O'Driscoll, J.Phillips)	3.82
h)	Public Strategies - Mike McCurry	4.9
i)	Kasten & Company (Sen. Kasten & F. Ruth)	3.82
j)	Federal City Council - K.Sparks	3.73
k)	U.S. Department of Commerce Roundtable	4.18
l)	Maryland State Economic Development (B.Bogage, E.Shomali, P. O'Neill)	4.55
m)	World Trade Center Inst. - M.Huxley	3.9

[Additional informal discussions held in Washington with Amira Sonbol on Jordanian businesswomen, with J.T. Morgan on regulatory processes, and with the Jordanian Ambassador are NOT evaluated.]

4. Participants rated the Washington portion on quality of

a.	Handouts and written materials provided	4.45
b.	Lodging	3.55
c.	Transportation	4.64

5. Washington DC portion overall rated **4.27**

AUSTIN, TEXAS

6. Participants rated each session in terms of clarity of presentation, quality of materials received, and usefulness. Rating is from 1 (low) to 5 (high).

		Avg.
a)	Overview	
	Larry Milner	4.73
	Chris Traylor	4.45
	Jack Speer	4.09
b)	Great Austin Chamber of Commerce	4.44
c)	Texas Association of Business & Chambers of Commerce	4.27
d)	Texas Society of Associations Executives	4.33
e)	Texas Hospital Association	4.73
f)	Professional Lobbyists Chris Shields & Paul Davis	4.82
g)	Sen. Wentworth's office	3.45
h)	Legislative Reference Library	3.73

(Additional informal discussions with Texas Society of Association Executives' Board Members not rated.)

7. Austin Texas portion overall rated **4.1**

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

8. Participants rated each session in terms of clarity of presentation, quality of materials received, and usefulness. Rating is from 1 (low) to 5 (high).

a)	Georgia State Chamber	4.27
b)	Metro Atlanta Chamber	4.18
c)	Georgia Dept of Industry & Trade	3.89
d)	Small Business Development Center	4

9. Participants rated the Atlanta portion on quality of

a.	Handouts and written materials provided	4.3
b.	Lodging	4.9
c.	Transportation	4.55

10. **Atlanta portion overall rated** **4.22**

OVERALL

11. Participants responses on which session during the entire visit was the most useful included:

Congressional Research service & Chris Traylor in Austin & Texas Hospital Association were very professional and conveyed their information very smoothly.
US Dept of Commerce, GA Dept of Industry and Trade, and the Maryland State Economic Development were the most beneficial due to extensive brainstorming and exchange of ideas on economic development issues.
US Chamber of Commerce – the speakers were excellent.
Small Business Administration because the picture of how they work is clear and they have deep experiences which reflect in their work
Chris Shields – insight into advocacy beyond the logistics of the process
Texas Hospital Association – very relevant to what we need to do back home by business associations vis-à-vis what could be done by professional lobbyists.
Chris Shields
The Austin segment overall because the state level is easiest to relate to, the organizations were well selected, and they explained their role in advocacy very clearly.
In Washington, the US Chamber of Commerce and the US Department of Commerce.

12. **Participants responses on which session during the entire visit was the least useful included:**

Kasten because current role of company is business match-making, it was not clear where advocacy role of company in laws and policies is.
SBA in government
SBA government
Kasten not related to the main goals
Federal City Council not relevant to my objectives
None
Senator Wentworth's staff because of preparation for visit
SBA – robot relationships
Atlanta

13. Some participants indicated that the following subjects should be covered in future programs:

Documented case studies representing major processes of advocacy.
Documentation of successful advocacy process
More information about establishing and running a small association
To find a counterpart and build on-to-one relationships between US and Jordanian associations
I would appreciate a manual on setting up and managing associations with suggested work plans for membership advocacy, etc.
More focus on economic development agencies
Management of small business incubators

14. Additional comments were:

Atlanta was an excellent selection as a city but did not offer much new to what was already observed, except for the Small Business Center
It is a good idea to add a liberal think tank to balance the conservative Heritage Foundation

This trip was very informative; it will be a great thing to have its contents taught in our country. I would like to thank USAID, AMIR, Chemonics and CIPE for this great trip.

The stress on teamwork between government and associations as two vital parts of a successful democratic country is of great importance. Our mixed delegation were very impressed by this and learned a lot. I wish the knowledge I received could be spread wide in Jordan. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude for the organizers of this trip, namely USAID, AMIR, Chemonics, and CIPE.

Focus more and more on the main goal and not go off track.

I would like to commend our hosts, particularly Jean Rogers and Jeff.

It was a very beneficial program. Future programs could be sector-specific, i.e. manufacturing, banking, IT...

Better preparations of the flight arrangements could be helpful.

Very fruitful – now I know why USA is powerful – your people have the spirit of teamwork, and community benefits.

My thanks for giving me this opportunity to get to know more about US. It was useful.

Meeting contacts

U.S. Arab Chamber Of Commerce
Richard P. Holmes, President
Mazhar Samman, EVP
1023 15th Street, N.W. 4th Floor
Washington DC 20005

U.S. Small Business Administration
Erika Fischer, Director, Int'l Visitors Program
Washington District Office
409 3rd St, SW
Washington DC 20416

American Society of Assn Executives
Toni Crouch, Director of Education
Executive Management Division
1575 I St., NW
Washington DC 20005-1168

Heritage Foundation
Dr. Kim T. Holmes, Vice President
Kathryn & Shelby Collum Davis Intl Studies Ctr
214 Massachusetts Avenue, NE
Washington DC 20002

Public Strategies Group
Mike McCurry, President
633 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20004

Kasten & Co.
Senator Robert W. Kasten, President
815 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20006

Maryland Economic Development Corp
Pete O'Neil, Manager, Trade Devel. Group
Dept Of Business & Economic Development
217 East Redwood St., 12th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21202

Library Of Congress
Judy Schneider, Specialist on the Congress
Congressional Research Service
Washington, DC 20540

Representative Benjamin Gilman's office
Debbie Bodlander, senior staff
2449 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515-3220

Baltimore World Trade Center Institute
Matthew Huxley
World Trade Center Baltimore
401 East Pratt St., Suite 232
Baltimore, MD 21202

US Chamber Of Commerce
Willard Workman, VP International
Lonnie Taylor, Chief Lobbyist
Stephen Thurman, Deputy Chief Economist
1615 H Street NW
Washington DC 20062

Metro Atlanta Chamber Of Commerce
Nancy Gregory, Manager International Dept
John Dixon, Vice President of Sales
235 International Boulevard N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30303

Small Business Development Center
Bernie Meineke, Director
Georgia State University, University Plaza
10 Park Place South, Suite 450
Atlanta, GA

Georgia Dept of Industry Trade & Tourism
Kevin Langston
285 Peachtree Center Avenue, NE
Suites 1000 and 1100
Atlanta, GA

Georgia Chamber of Commerce
Stephen Loften, Government Relations
235 Peachtree Street
Suite 900 North Tower
Atlanta, GA 30303

Chris Shields
1005 Congress Avenue
Suite 480
Austin, TX 78701

Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce
Mark Hazlewood, President and CEO
P.O. Box 1967
Austin, TX 78767

Paul Davis
606 Meadow Creek Drive
Pflugerville, TX 78660

Cindy Brockwell
Chief of Staff for Senator Jeff Wentworth
Texas State House
Austin, TX 78700

Texas Dept of Human Services
Chris Traylor, Public Information Officer
P.O. Box 149030
Austin, TX 78714-9030

Delta Associates
Jack Speer ,President
100 congress Avenue
Suite 1800
Austin, TX 78701

Texas Society of Association Executives
2550 South IH-35, Suite 200
Austin, TX 78704

Robert Floyd
210 Ashworth
Austin, TX 78701

Texas Assn of Business & Chambers of Commerce
Art Roberts, President
1209 Nueces Street
Austin, Texas 78701

Global Strategy Consultants
Larry Milner
707 Ranchview Drive
Johnson City, TX 78636

Texas Hospital Association
Dinah Welsh, Director of State Affairs
Ann Ward, VP of Communications
PO Box 15587
Austin, TX 78761-5587